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Prologue

[image]

Sootstar shook his fur as he walked through the lush green forest. He sensed prey in almost every shrub, not bothering to look. He was looking for someone. *Oh come on! Where are you!?* He walked further, into a clearing. There, sitting on a rock, was the beautiful she-cat he was looking for. Her tortoiseshell and white pelt shone in the moonlight. She turned her head and majestically jumped of the rock. "Hello, Sootstar." She mewed gingerly.

"Hello, Dappledmoon." Sootstar replied. The she-cat came closer and put her nose against his. "There's danger coming to the forest, and one cat will put that danger to an end." Then, she disappeared.

Chapter 1

[image]

Brightkit leapt out of the way as Greenkit hurled himself at her. He landed head first next to Sunkit, Brightkits brother. "Haha! You can't catch me!" She taunted. He got up and shook his fur, then he leaped again, only to be bowled over by Twistedkit and Streamkit. "Ugh!" He hissed.

"Come on kits! It's getting dark! You need your energy for your playing." Daisybranch, a very young queen said. Shrewpelt, the medicine cat, had announced she was pregnant only a day ago. They kits moaned, but they didn't want to argue and they went in. "Mama, can you tell us a story?" Brightkit heard Twistedkit mew a few mouse-lengths away. She saw the dark outline of Silvermoon, his mother, shaking her head. She looked around and saw Sunkit and Sparklekit, her sister, sleeping against Snowears belly. Then she looked out and saw dark clouds rolling in. Then she saw the sundown patrol leaving. She yawned and rested her head on her paws and fell asleep.

Brightkit heard the slow patter of rain and felt a paw prodding her side. "Cut it out!" She hissed and turned on her back. She looked up and saw Sunkit and Sparklekit gazing down on her. "What!?" She hissed.

"Keep it down! Let's go out and do something awesome so Ripplestar will make us apprentices sooner!" He mewed.

"Like what?"

"Uh.... let's get a whole lot of prey or drive a fox out our territory!"

Brightkit rolled her eyes, but she didn't want to leave her younger kin without their older kin with them. She got up and shook scraps of moss from her fur. She crept out of the den with Sparklekit and Sunkit following.

"How are we going to get over the stepping-stones?" Sparklekit asked.

"I don't know! Uh... what about that piece of wood?" Brightkit suggested. The kits looked at eachother, and when the

small log came closer, they leaped onto it. The log shook violently, and Brightkit almost lost her footing. When the log stopped, the other side of the lake was almost visible.

"Come on guys! Paddle with your paws, it will help us get to the other side." Said Brightkit. The three kits started paddling. "Almost... there!" Sparklekit growled.

"Everyone, jump!" At that moment, all of the kits jumped and landed in the soft grass. *Ow! What was that?* Brightkit slowly got up and looked at her side. There was a small scratch with blood dripping from it. She looked at Sparklekit and Sunkit. They were getting up, but they seemed okay. Sunkit looked at Brightkit.

"Brightkit! Are you okay!?" He whined. She looked back at him. "Fine." She mewed calmly.

"That looks painful!" He whimpered some more.

Brightkit rolled her eyes. "I'm fine! Just get me some comfrey, or dock, or *something*!"

"Wait, how do *you* know that?"

"I don't know! Know go look over there! I think I see some." She growled. The kits ran over to a small clump of light green leaves. "It's right here." She said, ripping of a few leaves, handing them to Sunkit. "Know squeeze the dock juice onto my scratch and then put the leaves on!" She mewed. She winced as the juice touched the open part of the scratch. She felt the leaves being placed. "One more?" Asked Sunkit.

"No, two are okay. Just go get some cobweb now and put it over the leaves! It's easy to find because they're mostly in *huge* clumps. Now go!" She instructed. The two kits bounded off, leaving Brightkit in front of the river. Then, a noise started Brightkit. She turned her head in the direction it came from, and saw a faint shape. It slowly walked toward her.

"Brightkit." She said

How does she know my name!?

"There's danger coming to the forest, and one cat will put and end to that danger."

Then the she-cat started fading away. "W-what?" Brightkit said, confused. "Hey, Brightkit! Who ya talking to?" Sparklekit mewed, a big wad of cobweb in her mouth, with Sunkit holding the other end. "Uh... n-no one." She stammered. The kits shrugged and gently put the cobweb on. *I don't even know who that was...*

Brightkit stood at the edge of the ThunderPath as monsters zoomed by. "Wow! Is that the ThunderPath?" Sunkit wrinkled his nose in disgust. "And it smells!"

"Are we gonna cross it?! I want to see what's over there!" Sparklekit said as she looked at the pine trees over the path. Not many monsters were crossing now. "Let's go now! I don't see anything!" Sunkit mewed. He stepped onto the ThunderPath, followed by Sparklekit, and then Brightkit. She looked down at her paws as she walked, and then heard something.

She saw Sunkit and Sparklekit looking at the direction of the noise. Then Brightkit heard Sunkit shriek.

Monster!

Chapter 2

[image]

Brightkit leaped out of the way and landed on her injured side, scraping the leaves and cobweb off. Time seemed to stop as she lay there, but it had only been a matter of seconds. She sprung up and shook her fur and then looked at her scratch. It had opened again, not as bad, but it had started to bleed. She didn't care about that now.

She turned her gaze to the ThunderPath. Two limp bodies lie on the hard stone ground. For a second she thought she saw Sunkit move. Then another light blue monster was heading toward them, but slowed a tail-length away from the limp kits.

It's bright eyes suddenly flashed off, leaving Brightkit in the darkness. She heard two clicking sounds, then a bright light flashed in her eyes. She narrowed her eyes and saw a young male twoleg holding the bright light. Then the light moved and shone on the kits bodies. The twoleg opened the monster and went into its belly, then it's eyes flashed and the monster woke up. The light inside the belly were shining too.

The twoleg got out the belly and wrapped the limp kits in a white material and put them inside the back of the monster. Then he grabbed something out of the belly and slowly walked toward Brightkit. She knew it could be dangerous but she walked toward it anyway. In his pink, hairless paw there was little brown shapes that looked like rabbit droppings. She was starving, and this smelled like food, so she followed the twoleg to the monster. The twoleg placed the mouth-watering pellets on the ground and she wolfed them down. She saw the twoleg crouch down and he reached out to her. She sniffed his paw and then nuzzled it. His hand was warm and soft, like the moss she slept in.

Then, the twoleg gently scooped her up and put her in a brown thing in the monster. It was made of material she could claw open, but that would take a while. She felt the monster rumble and make a noise, and then it started shaking some more, but not as violently. She started thinking of the words the odd she-cat had said. *There's danger coming to the forest, and one cat will put and end*

to that danger. What danger, and *whic*h cat? All Brightkit could do know was lie down and rest.

Chapter 3

[image]

Brightkit slowly crept through the dark forest. She had been in a twoleg nest for about six moons now, but she finally escaped. She knew the territory she was on know was RiverClan, because it smelled like fish almost everywhere. Somewhere nearby, bushes rustled. She stared at the unmoving bush. She smelled and noticed she was upwind of the creature. She stalked to the other side of the Bush and smelled a fishy cat smell.

When she realized it was a RiverClan cat, she decided to talk. "Hello?" She meowed? Her meow echoed through the silent forest, causing a bird to call an alarm. Then a muscular mud-brown Tom cat sprung out of the bushes and bowled Brightkit over, knocking the air out of her. He yowled and was about to lunge for her throat when he stopped, frozen. "Brightkit?! Is it *really* you!?" The cat said.

"Puddlefur!?" Brightkit said. The cat nodded. A dark grey cat with a white stripe between his eyes leaped out the bushes. "Yellowclaw! It's Brightkit!" Puddlefur purred. *Yellowclaw? Who's Yellowclaw..? Oh! It's Yellowpaw! He became a warrior.* Yellowclaw walked up to them. She got up and shook scraps of grass from her fur, feeling slightly embarrassed. "Puddlefur, don't you mean Bright*paw*? Yellowclaw meowed.

Puddlefur cleared his throat. "Uh... yes. Brightpaw. Your apprentice ceremony was supposed to be yesterday. Come on. Ripplestar will make you an apprentice soon." Brightkit bubbled with excitement. She would become and apprentice! Then she thought of something. Ripple*star.* That's what Puddlefur said. Who was the deputy? Did Sootstar know about the *There's danger coming to the forest, and one cat will put an end to that danger* prophecy? *Was* it a prophecy? And did Ripplestar currently know about it?

As she jumped over the stepping-stones, she felt curious glares gazing at her. Puddlefur led her to the leaders den. "Ripplestar?" He meowed. A tortoiseshell head popped out the hole in the big stone. "Yes Puddle- Brightkit- I mean Bright*paw*! You're back!" He purred, getting out his den. The milky dawn light made his freshly groomed fur shine.

He sniffed the air, and then he leaped onto HighRock. "All cats old enough to catch their own prey gather beneath HighRock for a Clan meeting!" All cats started gathering. Brightkit sat at the base of the rock. "Today we have a new apprentice that was supposed to be named yesterday. Brightkit, step forward." His voice echoed through the clearing.

Brightkit leaped up onto the rock, then whispered to Ripplestar. He nodded. "I understand. Brightkit, from now on until you get your warrior name you will be known as Brightpaw and train as a medicine cat apprentice. Shrewpelt, Brightpaw will be your apprentice." He said. Then he put his nose on Brightpaws shoulder, and she did the same. She leaped down as the cats cheered. Shrewpelt walked over, a light smile on her face. She put her nose on Brightpaws shoulder, and she did the same again.

"Are we going to explore the territory?" She said eagerly. Shrewpelt nodded. "It's only dawn. I can take you on the Dawn patrol! They're just now leaving." The medicine cat turned around and ran toward the stepping-stones. Brightpaw followed.

The other cats on the patrol was Puddlefur, Darkclaw, Flamefur, Yellowclaw, and Greenpaw. They walked through the forest and to the RiverClan border where it touches ThunderClans border. "Greenpaw, mark the border." Yellowclaw demanded. When Greenpaw finished, they walked further to a tree with claw marks on it. "Now Brightpaw," Shrewpelt said, walking next to the tree. "This is how you mark the border." Once she demonstrated, she said to mark the tree where the claw marks were. Once she finished marking it, the cats separated to mark the border some more and to see if there were any trespassing ThunderClan cats.

Brightpaw had been walking for a while when a voice startled her. "Brightpaw." She turned her head and looked behind her and saw Greenpaw. "Hi, Greenpaw." She said, starting to purr. Then she buried her muzzle in the dirt and waited until she stopped purring. "What are you doing?" He said, walking up next to her. She took her muzzle out. "Oh, I'm fine!" She laughed as dirt fell from her muzzle. She sneezed and dirt came out her nose. Greenpaw laughed.

"Come on, let's go to the crooked tree; I want to show you something". Brightpaw followed Greenpaw to a twisted tree with lots if branches. He leaped onto one branch, then another, then another. "Wow! How do you do that!?" Brightpaw said. Greenpaw

shrugged. "Easy. You unsheath your claws and grip into the bark and push off hard."

"Can you... uh.... teach me?" She hesitated.

"Sure! I'm already teaching Twistedpaw and Streampaw! One more cat won't hurt." He purred.

Brightpaw purred too. Then she heard something over the branches creaking. "Greenpaw! Be quiet!" She hissed. He stood still on a branch. "Do you hear that?" She mewed. He shook his head. Ever so quietly he jumped of the tree a few fox-lengths off the ground and landed perfectly on all fours.

She crawled across the forest floor, trying not to be all the way on her stomach and keeping her tail low. She tried to keep as quiet as possible. She peeked out from a bush and put her back paw on Greenpaws face so he could stop. She sniffed the air and realized no one was here. She signaled with her tail for them to go forward.

"What in StarClan....?" She quietly leaped over the bush and landed on all paws, making dust go everywhere. Greenpaw sneezed. "Sorry," He said. She looked at the claw marks drawn in the dust. She examined them closely. There were cats drawn into the sand. First there were cats in a pit. Two cats were at the top and one of them was dead. Then it showed other drawings with other dead cats and pits. The last one showed a lot of cats and a really big one on the rock.

Greenpaw said, "Wow." Brightpaw rolled her eyes. "Who do you think did this? And *why*?" Greenpaw shrugged. Then they heard a noise. "*Run!*"

Chapter 4 (I'm stopping adding pictures to my chapters srry)

Brightpaw stopped near the river. Greenpaw bumped into her, pushing her forward and almost making her trip. "Did the claw marks have a scent?" Greenpaw mumbled, confused. She shrugged. "I didn't have time to smell them. If they had a scent it was faint," she meowed. Greenpaw walked to the edge of the river and lapped up some water. Brightpaw walked next to him and sat down. "Should we go check again?" He whispered into her ear. She shook her head. "I still hear noises from that direction." Greenpaw tilted his head slightly. "You hear something? From that direction? I don't hear anything." She looked at the cream and brown Tom. "Really?" She said, puzzled. He nodded and turned his gaze back to the river and looked in. The sunlight reflected off the water. Greenpaw kneaded the ground with his paws and looked into another direction, still staring at the ground. He sighed.
"What's wrong?" Brightpaw asked, starting to feel sorry for her Clanmate.
"I.... I just wish you could have been a regular warrior apprentice," he said, looking back into the river.
"W-why?" She asked, confused. She wanted to be a Medicine Cat. Shrewpelt was getting kind of old and they needed a young Medicine Cat.
"Well... the thing is...," Greenpaw started, "I l-"
"You guys done?" All the others had appeared as Darkclaw spoke. Brightpaw nodded. "Then let's go. We can go hunting later, if Shrewpelt lets you." Flamefur meowed. Brightpaw leaped over the stepping-stones, wondering what Greenpaw was going to say. Something that started with an "*L*". But what? Now she had *two* things to figure out. The strange prophecy, *and* what Greenpaw wanted to say. And didn't all cats hear so good that they could sense a lot of twoleg den-lengths away? *Wow. First day as an apprentice is already confusing.* She finally got to the island. Ripplestar was gathered around the fresh-kill pile with some of his best warriors, including Shrewpelt. *I hope that'll be me one day*. She walked over to

the fresh-kill pile after the kits and elders had been fed and grabbed a skinny squirrel hidden beneath the pile. *A squirrel? RiverClan cats don't eat squirrels!* She automatically turned her gaze to Greenpaw and walked over to him. He immediately turned his gaze away from her and looked at the sky.
"Did you catch this? I'm not angry, I'm just wondering," Brightpaw said. He slowly nodded. "D-do you want to share...?" He stammered. She nodded and picked up the squirrel. She walked to a shaded part from a tree on the island. There were a lot of trees in the island, only on the outline, making it hard for kits, or anyone, to escape. The only way would be the stepping-stones, but there was always a guard. She put the squirrel down and settled down beside it while Greenpaw lay down next to her.
There was no conversation. They finished eating and buried the scraps next to a bush, then started off to their dens. On the way, Ripplestar called Brightpaws name. "Yes?" She mewed.
"Come, join our conversation," He meowed. She nodded and quickly said bye to Greenpaw, who quickly gave her ear a lick. She settled down next to her mentor. "So, there is trouble with ThunderClan. I've been seeing them on our territory when I go on patrols. At our next gathering, I'll talk to them. Also, Brightpaw," Ripplestar explained, catching her attention,"soon you will go on your first trip to the Moonstone." Brightpaw brightened up. "Come on, Brightpaw, how about I teach you some herbs?" Shrewpelt said, probably noticing the excitement coming off of her in waves.
As she walked to the den, she spotted Greenpaw crouched down on a branch of a tree. "Can I talk to you for a second?" He whispered loud enough for her to hear. "Uh, Shrewpelt? I have to go, uh.... make dirt," she mewed, feeling slightly embarrassed. "Okay," the Medicine Cat said, "but be quick!" She went the way toward the stepping-stones, then turned and jumped on the stone den of the Medicine Cat. She leaped on to a branch next to Greentail.
"Yes?" She whispered.
"Remember when we were next to the river?" He mewed. She nodded. "That was today, stupid furball!" She snorted leaping on him, and gently cuffing his ear. "What I was going to say... uh... it was that I... I l-love-"
"Brightpaw! Are you back?" She heard Shrewpelt yowling. "Sorry gotta go!" She mewed, licking Greenpaws nose. She jumped of as Greenpaw sat down and watched her. She leaped over the den and

pretended to come from the stepping-stones. "I'm here now," she mewed. The Medicine Cat nodded slowly and walked in, Brightpaw following. *Love? Was that the word? But love* who*? Or* what*?*